

**Remarks by Ed Markey (D-MA)
 Tuesday, February 12, 2002
 Congressional Black Caucus, Alzheimer's Task Force,
 and the Alzheimer's Association
 Disproportionate Prevalence of Alzheimer's Disease in the
 African American Community**

Good afternoon. Thank you to my good friend and the Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus Eddie Bernice Johnson, thank you Orien (o'ryen) Ried of the National Board of Directors of the Alzheimer's Association and thank you Dr. Hugh Hendrie for being here today to share your excellent research on Alzheimer's disease.

I used to say that Alzheimer's disease was an equal opportunity illness, but today's Alzheimer's Association report highlights that African Americans are more likely to fall victim to Alzheimer's than white Americans.

However, Alzheimer's continues to be indiscriminate in its cruelty -- whether black, or white, Republican or Democrat Alzheimer's is an equally devastating illness to one and all.

Today's Association report provides a call to action for us all to join forces -- the 38 Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the 158 Members of the Alzheimer's Task Force, the 4 million Americans suffering from Alzheimer's along with the countless at-home caregivers --- Today let us all join together to fight the epidemic that plagues our country and win the battle over Alzheimer's Disease before it affects over 14 million Americans by 2050.

Additionally troubling evidence in this report indicates that African Americans are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of Alzheimer's disease -- which limits the effectiveness of treatments requiring early intervention.

Given this data, I am eager to begin work on an initiative with Rep. Johnson and the CBC to raise awareness of these issues in Congress and build an educational campaign targeted at minorities to increase awareness of Alzheimer's disease.

And while progress in research over the last few years has brought us closer than ever to understanding Alzheimer's -- as this report further indicates African Americans are seriously underrepresented in Alzheimer's research. This is unacceptable. And this will continue to be the case unless we continue to devote the necessary resources to combating this illness.

We must band together to urge Congress and this Administration to increase federal funding for promising Alzheimer's research and to include communities in this research which have historically been excluded.

Last year, the Alzheimer's Task Force, along with the Alzheimer's Association set a goal of reaching \$1 Billion in federal research funding by 2003. Together we must continue to urge Congress and this Administration devote the necessary dollars to combat this disease sooner than later.

Working together we can do more -- and we must. So that one day children will have to look to the history books to learn about the epidemic that plagued the early part of the 21st Century - An epidemic caused by an illness that was ultimately cured.